

## BOOK REVIEWS

**A TEXTBOOK OF GYNECOLOGY.** By Arthur Hale Curtis, M.D., Emeritus Professor and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Northwestern University Medical School; and John William Huffman, M.D., Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Northwestern University Medical School. Sixth Edition—466 Illustrations. W. B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, 1950. \$10.00.

In preparing the sixth edition of this well-known text Curtis has shared the labors of revision with John W. Huffman, known for his contributions to the embryology of the genito-urinary tract. Curtis states in the introduction to the present edition that he had thought it advisable to divide the responsibility of revising the text in collaboration with a junior author actively engaged in teaching since he no longer participates in university duties. This is a farsighted move for it holds out a reasonable assurance for the perpetuation of a valuable textbook.

Curtis' Gynecology is an old standby for medical students and a handy guide for the busy practitioner and, as such, needs no detailed review. On the whole it is practical in its conception, it is readable and reliably documented. The present edition has been enriched with additional information about the embryology of the genito-urinary tract and some of the commoner disturbances of the vesicorenal system. Minor changes appear in many chapters. The chapters on anatomy, embryology and physiology are outstanding and beautifully illustrated by Tom Jones.

As far as diagnosis and treatment are concerned there might be room for further revision. Certain attitudes are strictly those of the senior author whose long experience in the practice and teaching of gynecology has made him rather set in his views. In some respects this enhances the value of the text because it allows teachers to take exception and therewith create discussion. However, a broader approach would be more enlightening to the student who then could acquaint himself with methods of treatment other than those advocated by the senior author. This is true in particular of the chapters dealing with the rapidly expanding field of endocrinology, with the study and treatment of dysmenorrhea and the etiology of cancer. There is room also for a broader discussion of psychosomatic phenomena particularly as this relates to the menarche, menopause, dysmenorrhea and the host of poorly understood pelvic complaints, not to forget the approach to the handling of cancer patients. Yet, all in all, none of these minor shortcomings detracts from the widely recognized value of this book as a teaching text and a practitioner's guide.

Curtis' Gynecology is illustrated elaborately, in fact, one might say, almost extravagantly. For instance, the mass of illustrations depicting a variety of surgical corrections of a rather limited field of traumatic disturbances is a fine example of the versatility of approach to a surgical problem but it must be bewildering to the young student to see such an array of surgical technique without finding adequate explanations in the text to permit him to understand why so many different procedures have been devised. This needs correction either through elimination of some of the less useful methods depicted or by offering a more adequate discussion of their respective applications. Your reviewer has watched the growth of this textbook since its first appearance and he has noticed that with each edition there is a growing tendency to develop it into a more elaborate handbook of the reference type. He hopes this will not

come to pass because handbooks are not handy texts for students. Besides, frequent revisions are out of the question because of the cost, the limited market and the monumental effort required to keep abreast with the progress of medicine. The three volumes of Gynecology edited by Arthur Curtis years ago are a good example of the fate of inflexible handbooks.

W. B. Saunders Company is known for its high standard in publishing medical texts. The sixth edition of Curtis' Textbook of Gynecology attests in every respect to the continuance of this enviable record. In view of the fine printing, the clear illustrations, high grade paper and good binding the cost of the book at \$10.00 seems not out of line although students are finding it increasingly difficult to acquire textbooks at the present high prices.

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**ANGINA PECTORIS AND MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION—With Special Reference to the Autonomic Nervous System.** By Heymen R. Miller, M.D., Formerly Principal Physician and Chief, Signal Corps Climatic Research; Attending Physician, Sydenham Hospital. Grune & Stratton, New York, 1950. \$8.75.

This book presents a detailed discussion of the anatomy of the autonomic pathways of the heart and their role in the distribution of cardiac pain in coronary disease and myocardial infarction. In addition, considerable information on the physiology of the autonomic nervous system and its relation to the circulation is presented. In this respect the book is valuable as a reference for those who wish unusually detailed information on these matters.

The remainder of the book considers the clinical aspects of the subject, including the electrocardiographic findings, and the medical and surgical aspects of treatment. In the reviewer's opinion a large part of this material is considerably below the standard of other parts of the book, and in some instances greatly detracts from its value as a text. The section on the electrocardiogram is entirely inadequate and adds little of value to the book. It is inferred that there are distinguishable differences between the electrocardiogram of myocardial infarction with coronary occlusion and that of myocardial infarction without coronary occlusion, and illustrative tracings are presented as examples which differ only in the degree of electrocardiographic abnormality. In the reviewer's opinion such differentiation is unsound and not based on generally accepted principles of electrocardiography. The electrocardiogram illustrating acute pulmonary embolism is described as showing a Q wave in lead III when the initial deflection of the ventricular complex in this lead is positive. In no instance is more than one precordial lead included with the electrocardiographic illustrations, and in only one instance was the site of the indifferent electrode noted.

The section on the clinical features of myocardial infarction is confused by the author's preoccupation with the clinical differentiation between myocardial infarction "with and without coronary occlusion"; and the illustrative cases presented offer the reader no reasonable basis for such a differentiation.

The section on treatment is adequate, though it suffers from the use of proprietary names for suggested drugs, ten of which were recommended as hypnotics.

This book cannot be recommended for medical students, and will have limited use as a reference text by physicians interested in heart disease.